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# Job vacancies 57 per cent higher than pre-COVID level

Media Release

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**i** Source: [Job Vacancies, Australia, May 2021](#)

Job vacancies in Australia in May 2021 were 57 per cent higher than February 2020, prior to the start of the pandemic, according to new seasonally adjusted figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said that job vacancies continued to increase and were up by 23 per cent over the quarter.

"There were around 362,000 job vacancies in May 2021, which was higher than we have ever seen in Australia. This was 69,000 more than February 2021 and 132,000 more than last February," Mr Jarvis said.

In May 2021, 22 per cent of businesses reported at least one vacancy, double the level in February 2020 (11 per cent).

"There has been a steady increase in the proportion of businesses reporting at least one vacancy, after it fell to 7 per cent in May 2020, early in the pandemic. By August it was already higher than the start of the pandemic (12 per cent), rising to 15 per cent in November, 18 per cent in February and 22 per cent in May 2021", Mr Jarvis said.

"Businesses across all industries have reported difficulties in filling vacancies."

The growth in Australia's job vacancies over the quarter was concentrated in the private sector, which accounted for 66,000 (96 per cent) of the increase.

Private sector job vacancies increased by 25 per cent over the quarter and were 61 per cent above February 2020. Public sector vacancies rose by 10 per cent over the quarter and were 24 per cent higher than February 2020.

In original series terms, job vacancies increased in all states and territories over the quarter. The largest growth was in Victoria (33 per cent), with the mid-May survey reference period falling before the state's most recent lockdown.

When compared with February 2020, the largest percentage increases were in Tasmania (90 per cent) and South Australia (83 per cent).

By industry, the largest percentage increases in job vacancies since February 2020 were in Arts and recreation services (170 per cent), Accommodation and food services (159 per cent), and Rental, hiring and real estate services (144 per cent).

The elevated level of job vacancies in May was echoed in the recent release of [Business Conditions and Sentiments \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/business-conditions-and-sentiments/latest-release\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/business-conditions-and-sentiments/latest-release), with 27 per cent of employers reporting difficulties in finding staff in June.

The ABS would like to thank businesses in Australia for their continued support in responding to our surveys during these challenging times.

## Media notes

- When reporting ABS data you must attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or the ABS) as the source.
- For the purposes of this publication, 'pre-COVID' refers to the February 2020 Job Vacancies, which was before the main impact of restrictions on businesses.
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